

## DECONSTRUCTION APPROACH A LITERARY ANALYSIS IN ORHAN PHAMUK'S *SNOW*

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### Abstrak

*Snow* adalah sebuah novel yang terjadi di tengah kota *Kars* dan mengisahkan tentang konflik antara Islam, dunia Barat, kekayaan, larangan terhadap pemakaian Jilbab di Turki. Novel ini juga membahas tentang seni, budaya, keberadaan tradisi kehidupan sehari – hari dan pengalaman manusia tentang kepedihan dan keindahan. Tulisan ini bertujuan mengungkapkan dekonstruksi sebagai sebuah pendekatan studi literature didalam novel '*Snow*' oleh Orhan Phamuk. Dekonstruksi adalah sebuah pendekatan yang diperkenalkan oleh seorang ahli filosofi dari Perancis yaitu Jacques Derrida, dimana secara teliti memperhatikan arti text pada pokok ungkapan yang berlawanan dan penemuan perlawanan secara internal menunjukkan bahwa semua dasar – dasar adalah kompleks, tidak stabil dan tidak mungkin. Jadi didalam dekonstruksi, Derrida mengatakan bahwa melakukan dekonstruksi artinya adalah bahwa membalikkan hirarki atas keberadaan system perlawanan.

**Key words :** *deconstruction, literary analysis, snow*

### Introduction

#### 1. Function of text

According to Derrida, language or 'texts' are not a natural reflection of the world. Text structures our interpretation of the world. Following Heidegger, Derrida thinks that language shapes us: texts create a clearing that we understand as reality. Derrida sees the history of western thought as based on opposition: good vs. evil mind vs. matter, man vs. woman, speech vs. writing. These oppositions are defined hierarchically: the second term is seen as a corruption of the first, the terms are not equal opposites.

Derrida thought that all text contained a legacy of these assumptions, and as a result of this, these texts could be re-interpreted with an awareness of the hierarchies implicit in language. Derrida does not think that we can reach an end point of interpretation, a truth. For Derrida all text s exhibit 'difference': they allow multiple interpretations. Meaning is diffuse, not settled. Textuality always gives us a surplus of possibilities, yet we cannot stand Outside of textuality in an attempt to find objectivity.

One consequence of deconstruction is that certainty in textual analyses becomes impossible. There may be competing interpretations, but there is no uninterpreted way one could assess the validity of these competing interpretations. Rather than basing our philosophical understanding on undeniable truths, the deconstructionist turns the settled bedrock of rationalism into the shifting sands of a multiplicity of interpretations.

<http://www.philosopher.org.uk/poststr.htm>

It is a general theory of text, not a "textualization" of politics but a politicization of text, of text as a system rather than as a book bound by covers. In 'Of Grammatology' (1967), Derrida first formulated the phrase that has haunted him ever since:

- a. there is no extra-text', or there is no frame, often interpreted as: 'There is nothing outside - or beyond – the text': 'there is no outside-the-text' signifies that one never accedes to a text without some relation to its contextual opening and that a context is not made up only of what is so trivially called a text, that is, the words of a book or the more or less

biodegradable paper document in a library. If one does not understand this initial transformation of the concepts of text ...[and] ... context, one understands nothing about nothing of ...deconstruction ... (Derrida, "Biodegradables", p. 841).

- b. all those boundaries that form the running border of what used to be called a text, of what we once thought this word could identify, i.e. the supposed end and beginning of a work, the unity of a corpus, the title, the margins, the signatures, the referential realm outside the frame, and so forth. What has happened is a sort of overrun that spoils all these boundaries and divisions and forces us to extend the accredited concept, the dominant notion of a 'text' ... that is no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces". (Derrida, "Living On/Borderlines", p. 81; pp. 83-84).
- c. An 'internal' reading will always be insufficient. Moreover . impossible. Question of context, as everyone knows, there is nothing but context, and therefore: there is no outside-the-text" (Derrida, "Biodegradables", p. 873).

Derrida's enlarged notion of text has been seen, curiously in an academic context, as a reduction of politics. Derrida denies the equation of textualization with trivialization. He maintains that: it was never our wish to extend the reassuring notion of the text to a whole extra-textual realm and to transform the world into a library by doing away with all boundaries...but...we sought rather to work out the theoretical and practical system of these margins, these borders, once more, from the ground up". Derrida is out to circumvent both the "text as world" and the "world as text".

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## 2. Deconstruction

Deconstruction or deconstructionism is an approach, introduced by French philosopher Jacques Derrida, which rigorously pursues the meaning of a text to the point of exposing the supposed contradictions and internal oppositions upon which it is founded - showing that those foundations are irreducibly complex, unstable, or impossible. Thus in deconstruction, Derrida says that doing deconstruction means that reversing the hierarchy, to the existed oppositional system (Faruk in Jabrohim, 2001: 183). The practitioner of deconstruction should work within the terms of system but in order to break it.

Deconstruction generally tries to demonstrate that any text is not a discrete whole but contains several irreconcilable and contradictory meanings; that any text therefore has more than one interpretation; that the text itself links these interpretations inextricably; that the incompatibility of these interpretations is irreducible; and thus that an

interpretative reading cannot go beyond a certain point.

As one of the main characteristics of post structuralism, deconstruction is one theory that is difficult to comprehend compared to other theories of post structuralism (Ratna, 2004: 222). One main characteristics of deconstruction is its refusal to logocentrism and and fonocentrism which finally lead to binary opposition and hierarchy dichotomy.

Derrida states that his use of the words deconstruction first took place in a context in which structuralism was dominant and its use are related to this context. Derrida states that deconstruction is an anti-structuralist gesture because "Structure were to be undone, decomposed, desidedented, At the same time for Derrida deconstruction is also a "structuralize gesture because it is concern with the structure of text. So for Derrida deconstruction involves a certain attention to structures and tries to understand how an "ensemble" was constituted.

([www.wikipedia.deconstruction.com](http://www.wikipedia.deconstruction.com))

Deconstruction takes reader's awareness on the text. It means that to get deep analysis about certain text, readers should dig out the implicit meaning and come to general statements. Derrida believes that there is no eternal truth, however the never ending process of deconstruction should be proven by supporting meaning in the text.

Deconstruction can be seen as an overcoming of the risk of repetition through revolution. In *Positions* Derrida states that deconstruction has two stages. Reversal and displacement. Reversal of a binary opposition which is also a violent hierarchy, followed by a reorientation, or displacement of the problem, to avoid repetition. You cannot skip reversal

and move straight on to displacement. Elsewhere Derrida seems to suggest that these two stages need not be executed in that order. Still, reversal and

displacement remain one way of thinking about deconstruction.

Deconstruction can also be seen as an allegories, or analogies of power. A politics

of 'linkage'. Because there is nothing outside the text - everything is included in 'reading' - connections are constantly made with the so-called 'real' or 'outside' world. It is an attempt to recover histories that have been 'repressed', 'minoritized', 'deligitimated'. Derrida claims that it is in fact the most historical of approaches:

"One of the most necessary gestures of a deconstructive understanding of history consists ... in transforming things by exhibiting writings, genres, textual strata (which is also to say - since there is no outside-the-text, right - exhibiting institutional, economic, political, pulsive [and so on] 'realities') that have been repulsed, repressed, devalorized, minoritized, deligitimated, occulted by hegemonic canons, in short, all that which certain forces have attempted to melt down into the anonymous mass of an unrecognisable culture, to '(bio)degrade' in the common compost of a memory said to be living and organic" (Jacques Derrida, "Biodegradables: Seven Diary Fragments", *Critical Inquiry* 15, 4 (1989), p. 821). It problematises the notion of author. The author is included in the text - because there's nothing outside the text - but as text, to be read, not as a governing presence. "... what [deconstruction] calls into question is the presence of a fulfilled and actualised intentionality, adequate to itself and its contents" (Jacques Derrida, "Limited Inc", pp. 202-203).

Derrida appeals to Freud and the psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious in order to back up his claim that intention is necessarily limited. Note, not that it doesn't exist. But it is limited. Deconstruction inhabits - in a parasitic way - the texts it reads. There is a kind of miming that goes

on. This is both a question of fidelity and of parody.

### 3. Binary Opposition

In critical theory, a binary opposition (also binary system) is a pair of terms or concepts that are theoretical opposites. In structuralism, a binary opposition is seen as a fundamental organizer of human philosophy, culture, and language. In the community of philosophers and scholars, most believe that "unless a distinction can be made rigorous and precise it isn't really a distinction.

In post-structuralism, it is seen as one of several influential characteristics or tendencies of Western and Western-derived thought, and that typically, one of the two opposites assumes a role of dominance over the other. The categorization of binary oppositions is "often value-laden and ethnocentric", with an illusory order and superficial meaning.

A classic example of a binary opposition is the rational-emotional dichotomy, of which the West imbues *rational* with a higher status than *emotional*. Another example is the dichotomy between presence and absence, with *presence* occupying a higher status in Western thought than absence. The similarities between each of the "higher" Western concepts such as *rational* and *presence*, as well as others such as *male* (vs. *female*) and *speech* (vs. *writing*) are thought to betray a historic bias in Western thought called logocentrism or phallogocentrism ([http://www.experiencefestival.com/a/Binary\\_opposition/id/1932570](http://www.experiencefestival.com/a/Binary_opposition/id/1932570)). Another example of binary opposition is presence opposes absence, speech opposes writing, philosophy opposes literature, the literal opposes the metaphorical, the central opposes the marginal, life opposes death, the real opposes the imaginary, the normal opposes the pathological, etc.

A philosopher who concerned himself with the issues of binary oppositions was Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Saussure, binary oppositions can be defined as "the means by which units of language have value or meaning; each unit is defined against what it is not." [online 1]. Saussure was a structuralist, whereas Derrida was a member of the poststructuralist school of thought, and this is why their ideas differ on the idea of binary opposition. For Saussure, binary oppositions occur naturally in the human mind, and these binary oppositions are constantly changing [online 2]. An example of this brings us back to the binary opposition of black and white. When we are younger, these were just colors. But, as one grows up, and gains knowledge these words gain ulterior meanings, and begin to symbolize other things, such as evil and good, or the hero and the villain [online 2]. Saussure's view on binary opposition is the one most recognized, and easiest to understand.

Jacques Derrida discusses the idea of binary oppositions to great lengths. He does not accept the idea however; instead he completely rejects it [online 3]. Derrida argues that these oppositions are subjective and constantly changing, therefore they will eventually overlap and begin to contradict one another. This is the essence of what Derrida called deconstruction.[online 4] In the words of Derrida himself, "What deconstruction is not? Everything of course! What is deconstruction? Nothing of course!" [online 4]. Basically Derrida is saying that words do not have actual meanings, they just relate to other words, and the mind creates meanings for these words, they do not actually exist. Derrida does however acknowledge the human tendency to think in opposites, but instead of the opposite of black being white; to him it is not-black.

There is much binary opposition in our world, and these create the hierarchy of our society. We attempt to break this hierarchy by placing all things equal, and on

the surface they may appear to be so, but the power of language is more than we can imagine. Words can change the implications of any other words, and once we apply the greatest machines on earth, our brains, to these words, interpretations and connotations will vary from every brain. Difference, Pairs, and Deconstruction are all valid theories, and in part we use all three in language, so the cultural studies theory known as Structuralism uses a term of art called "binary opposition" to explain human knowledge and to explain how many naturally occurring phenomena are constructed. Systems are "binary" when they are composed of only two parts. It's easy to imagine things "in opposition," like the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees, or the World War II alliances known as the "Axis Powers" and "the Allies." For an opposition to be truly "binary," however, the opposing classes of thing/idea must be mutually exclusive. That is, membership in one class must make impossible membership in the other. The baseball teams might be thought to be binary opposites, but remember that Babe Ruth played on both teams (hence the fabled "curse of the Bambino" on the Red Sox for trading him to the Yankees). If we are using the teams to construct the system of "major league baseball" for all time, it's apparent that one can play for both teams without destroying the system or one's self. The situation in World War II also resembled a binary opposition, with membership in the Axis or Allies being sharply distinguished in most cases, but some nations belonged to neither side, like the neutral states of Switzerland, Portugal, and Spain.

True binary oppositions that organize a class of thing are not supposed to allow confusion, that is allowing a thing to claim membership in both simultaneously, or exclusion, non-membership while still belonging to the class of things organized by the binary. The most obvious place in which binary oppositions work to structure knowledge is in computers' "machine code," the most basic level of programming which

tells each tiny microprocessor switch whether it is to be opened (0 or "off") or closed (1 or "on"). Everything you see on this screen, together with instructions for how it is to be displayed and where it is to be stored, is expressed to the computers in enormous strings of zeros and ones, a binary code that cannot fail if properly constructed.

The world of natural objects contains other "natural binaries," like magnetic poles (north and south) and gravitational force (to or away from the object in question). Some other binary structural principles in nature are "handedness" (AKA "chirality"--left vs. right) and symmetry vs. asymmetry. However, the more science investigates other presumed natural binaries, the more often they discover instances of confusion or exclusion. For instance, in the case of plants or animals which reproduce sexually, a naive view would imagine each species divided into binaries of "male" and "female," but hermaphrodites (both male and female characteristics) occur, as do species that change their sexual characteristics in response to environmental stress or ordinary life cycles (sea scallops). "Alive" and "Dead" used to be considered obvious natural binaries, but discoveries of objects called "prions" have called this into question--they appear to have no DNA but reproduce themselves and exhibit other life-like characteristics.

In the world of human cultural artifacts, binaries are much likely to be ambiguous if pressed to their limits, but they can function perfectly well as principles we use to navigate culture from day to day. For instance, we conventionally call "day" the period between sunrise and sunset, and "night" the remainder (or is it vice versa), although poets and painters long have drawn our attention to the beauties of the transitional moments at the dividing point between them. "Legal" and "Illegal" similarly function to help us distinguish between kinds of behavior even though a whole industry has grown up to argue the ambiguous points, and every year decisions

it makes are found to be deeply disturbing to portions of the populace. In literature, we will use binaries to determine how the text's world is structured just as we would our own, but we also unconsciously use binaries to organize thematic elements, like **fire and water images** in "Young Goodman Brown," *moon-time and clock-time* in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," and **poisonous and curative powers** in "Rappaccini's Daughter." oken and written.

**4. The form of binary opposition in Snow**

Oppositions are "structural" when they occur in numerous places in the text and

may operate on more than one level (specific words, more generalized images, abstract ideas). For instance, in the first opposition below, the pairs also can link up with more abstract ideas, as when moonlight can be associated with the supernatural and artificial with the rational, or moonlight can be associated with madness and artificial light with sanity. Look at what surrounds the word or image for clues to what it is being associated with. Some structural opposition occurs early in the text of "Snow" between these pairs of categories:

**Tabel 1.**  
Binary Opposition in 'Snow'

No	Ordinary	Sub ordinary
1	Western	Native
2	Modern	old fashioned
3	youth	Age
4	Innocent	knowing/experienced
5	Poor	rich
6	Powerless	Powerful
7	Stupid	Smart

Some of these are "binary oppositions," in that ordinarily something cannot belong to both categories simultaneously, but sometimes a binary can appear in the tale simultaneously, as when a poor and the rich can be on the same scene, or when western mingle with native. Binaries usually are distinguished as "privileged" (+) and "unprivileged" (-) if they are given social values.

Other oppositions have borders that are too imprecise to be binary, so that something could be considered to be in both or in neither, as in an adolescent person (neither young nor old) or an imperfectly informed person (neither innocent nor completely knowing). Authors often use those blurred boundaries to dramatic effect. At other times, a supposed binary may suddenly and cleverly be discovered to be not so absolute,

or the privileged term may suddenly become the unprivileged term and vice versa.

The novel of Snow is Orhan Pamuk's best work. He got the 2006 Nobel Prize for Literature. He is a writer with a formidable international reputation. Deeply rooted in a liberal tradition that values tolerance, freedom, and a respect for the other, this Turkish writer passionately embraces his identity while echoing universal human values.

The west is thought as having superior position compare to Turkish. The way of thinking of those who live in Western countries that lead to the development of technology is doe to the white race (Ratna:175). In this sense the white seems to always be served.

The binary opposition found in this story are as follows :

1. Cultural identity

Cultural identity construction can be seen from the Character of **Covered girls committed suicide**: increase in the number of Muslim girls committing suicide. The education institute banned girls from covering their head/hair with scarf and this was not well received by the fundamentalists and also by few girls themselves who willingly wanted to wear the scarves including Ipek's sister Kadife. Those who did not agree to shed the scarves were thrown out of school and purportedly committed suicide.

2. The secularists/Islamists

- a. Secular represents modern and western world.
- b. Islam represents terrorisms and brutality
  - 1) Banishing the people who humiliate and endanger the fight of Islam
    - (a) The murder of the director of the education Institute
    - (b) The murder of Gruner burner
    - (c) The murder of Ka
  - 2) Intimidating the atheists
    - (a) The intimidation of the director
  - 3) Showing friendship and tolerance to non Islam people
    - (a) The friendship between Blue and Ka, Turgut, Ipek
    - (b) The friendship between religious boys and ka

3. The male/female

Power and Equality

a. Showing power to men

- (1) Ipek to Muhtar
- (2) Ipek to Ka

*(Ka finds hope in this seemingly desolate place when he meets Ipek (his college time crush). The moment he sees her, he is besotted by her beauty and after that finds new ways to be in her company. Ipek with his father who is inclined towards communism) and sister Kadife take care of the hotel where Ka stays.*

*Thus starts a love affair which Ka dreams of ending in him and Ipek happily settled (a feeling that has always evaded him in his 40 year old life) in his exiled abode in Frankfurt away from all the killings and cacophony of "God forsaken" Kars. Only if it were that simple.*

b. Showing equal freedom to men's

- (1) Kadife's freedom
- (2) The suicide girls' freedom

c. Having equal position to men's in organization and society Kadife's position as the leader of organization.

5. Conclusion

This paper shows that the binary opposition Islamists / secularists are deconstructed. Usually, in reality, secular country is modern country and it is considered as powerful country. Therefore the secularists are also considered as powerful people who always dominate all the business in the country. In this novel, the entire story in real world is deconstructed because in fact they are powerless to the Islamists. Some activities prove these conditions such as banishing the people who try to humiliate the Islam rules, intimidating atheists who try to humiliate the Islam rules. Furthermore, in reality, Islamists fundamentalist which are considered as terrorists and brutal. In this novel, these people always show tolerance and friendship to other people. Thus the binary opposition Islamists / secularists is deconstructed.

Binary opposition male / female is deconstructed. This snow appears to be strongly stated that female takes a better position compared to men. Men are not as powerful as the women mentioned in *Snow*. Women are more powerful than men in the way that they always seem to think rationally to the problem that they face. They also have freedom to express their ideas, and they have reached the same position as men have. In conclusion, even though it appears as if reality is the part of the binary opposition

that is hierarchal to fiction in the novel, the opposition is effectively deconstructed

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